

For Jack Spicer

(and for Bill Collins)

Jack,
do you know now
how clouds tumble
how fish attack
the blue shapes of
humpbacked mountains?
how a girl bleeds
beside a well, or how
a brown boy feels
glass in his blanket?

And have you seen Garcia
Lorca wandering
telling what really
happened in Granada,
grabbing any ghost
willing to listen?

Blue creatures keep
passing us here. Our
eyes have fallen down
into the water. We
reach out and our hands
do not touch. Hearts
are still buried in sand.
Every evening afternoon
and morning a boy dies,
girls die; and dogs,
pheasants and poets
plunge themselves into
violet shadows. We
reach out and our hands
do not touch. Flickers
drive their beaks into
the roof of the house
trying to get in, for
food. We climb into beds
but find little warmth
until we have lain there
for hours in foetal positions.
We reach out and our hands
do not touch. No radar beam
suffices to reach you now.

Who reads our poems?

A current lover
leaves the last copy
of After Lorca behind
by the tire factory
pool, where the water
has died and miraculous
fishes are skeletons.

Thirst-lovers locate it
copy it out, drink it in
believing they have found
ichor, as the wind deceived
again says darling,
lightning belches, and
the toads we kick aside
leap off distraught
betrayed in search of
other water:

the young are axes
in the forest, diviners
after desert water.

Do boys and girls swim up
laughing out of luminous
heavenly pools where they
once drowned? Can you see
needles crumbling now, and
massive, water-soaked
cactuses tumbling over?

Can you see, Jack?
or are your eyes still
crammed too full
of paper?

-- Robert Peters

Riverside, Calif.

tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock,